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C O N F I D E N T I A L RANGOON 000638

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EAP/BCLTV; USPACOM FOR FPA  
COMMERCE FOR ITA JEAN KELLY

E.O. 12958: DECL: 05/19/2014

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SUBJECT: BURMA UPHOLDS CONVICTIONS FOR CONTACTING ILO

REF: RANGOON 366

Classified By: COM Carmen M. Martinez for Reasons 1.4 (B,D)

¶1. (C) A special two-judge panel of the Burmese Supreme Court on May 12 supported a secret lower court's ruling from November 2003 that two men, Naing Min Kyi and Aye Mint, are guilty of treason for contacting the International Labor Organization (ref). However, on the basis of a lack of evidence the panel changed the specific treason charges against them to "aiding and abetting people committing treason" and reduced their sentences from death to three years in prison.

¶2. (C) The special panel also upheld the ruling by the lower court for a third defendant, Shwe Man, who was found guilty of treason partly for contacting the ILO and partly for allegedly plotting to assassinate SPDC leaders. The panel reduced Shwe Man's sentence from death to life in prison.

¶3. COMMENT: The special panel's ruling, which we believe was ordered by the highest levels of the regime, at first glance appears a positive development since it overturns several death sentences. However, three years in jail simply for contacting the ILO is still unacceptable and runs counter to the regime's previously stated willingness to create a permissive environment for the ILO to operate in Burma. END COMMENT.

Martinez